



Karere Pāpāho/Media Release
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The call of the Tui hopes to inspire students at Northland College

This Friday, a giant five metre hand and spray painted mural of a Tui (bird) will be revealed at Northland College, a generous gesture from world champion graffiti artist Charles Williams and contemporary Māori artist, Mike Tupaea.

The mural was created as part of Ngāpuhi Festival and the Toi Ngāpuhi Exhibition in Whangārei earlier this year and was a very popular attraction. During its creation, the artists offered to gift the mural to Northland College, to help inspire the students and wider Kaikohe community.

Northland College Principal John Kendal says, “We’re incredibly humbled and excited to be receiving the art as we often don’t fully acknowledge or are unaware of how revered these artists are. However, the fact they’re sharing with us makes them great role models for our students”.

The mural is symbolic in Charles’s and Mike’s journey and identity as contemporary artists and as Māori.

Mike (Ngāpuhi, Tainui) says, “by combining traditional symbolism with street art that's popular, we can tell our stories and keep our identity strong while inspiring the next generation. We understand Māori kids from colourful backgrounds. Our work is about inspiring, sharing our stories and advancing who we are as Māori on a world stage”. Mike hopes the mural inspires Northland College students to be strong in their identity as Ngāpuhi and as Māori.

Charles (Ngāti Kahungunu, Tuhoe, Ngāpuhi) is a three-time graffiti world champion and a founding member and president of the world championship winning crew TMD (The Most Dedicated), a collective of creative artists from around the world.

“It’s part of my own personal journey with understanding who I am as a Māori, that’s why I named the piece *Ko Wai Koe?*” says Charles. “My whānau had no Māori influence in their lives. We all wanted to be American hip hop fullas related to the dudes in the hood. So we were immersed in another culture, speaking like Americans.”

Charles’s journey has led to the rekindling of ancestral ties with the mural as his way of giving back and sharing the importance of cultural identity. “It’s essential to know who you are, and through arts and storytelling, people start seeing more of the beauty of who they are.”

Ngāpuhi Rūnanga CEO, Lorraine Toki says “We all have a role to play in the positive future of our tamariki and the Rūnanga is pleased to support the generosity of our Ngāpuhi artists. This also strengthens positive relationships with the College and helping to transform and inspire Northland College students to realise their aspirations and become positive role models and future leaders.”

The official presentation will be held at **Northland College** this **Friday 26 October** from **9-10am**.

Ends.

Enquiries and interviews

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Photos supplied (2)

- Charles Williams and Mike Tupaea creating the Tui mural at Ngāpuhi Festival